 Blessed Are The Pure In Heart

Mattew 5:8-16

Key Verse:5:8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”

Last week we studied 5 blessings among 8 blessings. Today we’ll study the rest of 3 blessings and how to live as those who are blessed today.

Sixth, Blessed are the pure in heart. (8) Let us read verse 8. “***Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.***” John Piper said, “Heart is a window.” I believe when he said this, he meant that heart is a window to see through God and his kingdom. Before you drive your car, you check your front window if it is clean enough to see the front. If the window is dirty, you cannot see outside or you are dangerous while driving. In the same way we cannot see the kingdom of God, when our heart is dirty. Sin makes our heart dirty, blurry, and blocks our sight so that we cannot see God or the kingdom of heaven. Our heart will be clean when we have no sin. It is Jesus who makes our hearts clean from sin. 1 John 1:7 says, “*the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*”

Here, the word ‘pure’(*katharos*) has several meanings in Greek such as purified by fire, pruned, prevents corruption, offers not mixed one, but genuine. We need to pay attention to the last one in view of holiness. Being pure means not only moral or sexual purity, but also holiness before God. It is an undivided heart toward God. Before the Israelites entered the Promised land, God told them through Moses, “*The Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.*” (Deut 6:5) God taught them that the LORD God is one, not many. God also taught them to love him with all their heart, soul, and strength. God wanted them to focus on him. But when they entered the Promised Land, they forsook God and worshiped idols. Their hearts were stolen from the things of the world and divided into many parts. They lost purity as the people of God. On the contrary, Daniel, who was exiled to Babylonia, did not defile himself with the pagan culture. He resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine which were offered to idols. Daniel kept his purity and offered himself as a living sacrifice. We need *katharos*, not mixed with things of this world, but offer our full and genuine devotion to God. Paul said in Romans 12:2, “*Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind*.” How can we overcome temptations and keep our hearts pure and holy? Psalm 119:9-11 says, “*How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.*” Jesus said to his disciples in John 15:3, “*You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.*” The word of Jesus makes us clean and helps us to focus on God. This is the reason we study the Bible and write testimonies based on God’s word.

 Jesus himself is the window to see God and the kingdom of heaven. Jesus, the Incarnate God, made his dwelling among us, so that we can see the Father God through the Son Jesus. As Hebrews 1:3 says that the Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being. John 1:18 says, “*No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known*.” Once Philip, one of his disciples, asked Jesus to show them the Father. Jesus answered him, “*Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father*’?” (Jn14:9)

Seventh, Blessed are the peacemakers. (9) A few months ago, Mary and I had a chance to visit the Korean War Memorial Park in Washington DC. There we saw the famous words written on a monument, “*Freedom is not free.*” In fact, during the Korean War 36,634 young American soldiers were killed, including 1,000 young men from Missouri only. Indeed, freedom is not free, so we remember them and appreciate their sacrifice to protect Korea and to provide freedom for the country.

Let us read verse 9. “***Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.***” Jesus’ concern in this beatitude is not with the peaceful but with the peacemakers. Peace is very important and necessary, especially these days, when wars between Russia and Ukraine and between Israel and Hamas continue. We need peace not only between nation and nation, but also between husband and wife, between parents and children, and between brothers and sisters. As long as hostility remains, there is no peace. So, Jesus came to this world as a peacemaker. His name was Prince of Peace. (Is 9:6) Ephesians 2:14-15 says, “*For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and had destroyed the barrier, the diving wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace.*” Sin separated men from God. Men who sinned against God were the object of God’s wrath. There is a word, ‘*propitiation*’ which means ‘appease the wrath of God.’ In the book of Jonah, Jonah became the sacrifice of propitiation when the sailors threw him into the roaring sea to pacify the angry sea god. In the same way God demonstrated his justice by punishing Jesus on the cross and made him a sacrifice of propitiation to make peace between God and men. This is why John the Baptist said when he saw Jesus coming toward him, “*Look, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*.” (Jn 1:29)

In the book of Romans Paul said that Jesus became ‘a sacrifice of atonement’. (Ro 3:25) So, anyone who believes in Jesus is free from God’s anger, and enters into his permanent peace. Romans 5:1 says that we have peace with God through faith in Jesus Christ. Peace comes from reconciliation through forgiveness. Who are the peacemakers today? They are those who say ‘I am sorry’ first and initiate reconciliation. They are also those who preach the gospel to others. They are truly blessed and deserve to be called children of God.

Eighth, Blessed are the persecuted. (10-12) Olympics are still going on in Paris France. During the opening ceremony of the Olympics there was a despicable happening which reminds us of the word “*abomination that causes desolation*.” (Dan 9:27, Mt 24:15) Several transgenders artists appeared almost naked and performed a parody of Jesus’ Holy Communion, simulating the Lord’s Supper of Leonard Da Vinci. They were evidently blaspheming God and mocking Christians. The President of France praised them saying, “It was one of the most creative and artistic performances. In fact, France is paying the price of their godless life in many ways today. Some may not take this performance seriously, but spiritually speaking it was a contempt to Christianity and an unsung persecution against Christians.

Look at verses 10-12. **“*Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you***.” These days, anyone who speaks against homosexuality is accused of a hate crime. The anti-Christianity atmosphere is rapidly growing louder at school, in government, at work, and even at the Olympics, while the voices of Christians are becoming smaller and weaker. Christian students suffer from peer pressure and marginalization. Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:12 , “*In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted*.” One high school valedictorian was warned not to talk about Jesus in his address. But this young boy boldly proclaimed the name of Jesus and praised his holy name before the crowd. We need such courage and faith like this young man. He knew that his reward in heaven would be great.

Lastly, verses 13-16 are about the influence and duty as the blessed men. Look at verses 13-16. “***You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.***” Jesus called his disciples the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Nothing is more useful and important than salt and light in our lives. Salt gives flavor to food and preserves it from corruption and decay. In the winter time, salt melts icy roads. Recently it is reported that salt clears air by absorbing all kinds of unhealthy ions in the air. Salt also protects fish in the sea by absorbing all kinds of harmful elements. Above all, blood, sweat, and tears in our body are all salty. These days I use salt every night to heal my gum infection. It is not too much to emphasize the necessity and usefulness of salt. When Jesus said that you are the salt of the earth, he meant we, you and I, are important and very necessary people in this world. No one is useless or unimportant to the eyes of God because God said, “*It was very good*!” when he made us. Also, what Jesus meant was that we must live as useful and necessary persons for this world. God wants us to protect this world from the corruption of sin. God wants us to make this senseless world full of meaning and blessing. God wants us to heal this sick world and clear the pollution of evil spirits. Above all, God wants us to be the witnesses of the kingdom of heaven as those who are blessed. If we lose our saltiness, which is our good and positive influence as Christians, we will be despised and trampled underfoot by the unbelievers like Lot in the city of Sodom.

It is the same when Jesus said that you are the light of the world. Light gives sight to darkness. Jesus himself was the light. Jesus gave light to this dark world. Jesus said, “*I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life*.” (Jn 8:12) Now Jesus wants us to become the light of the world. Look at verses 14-16 again. No one lights a lamp and puts it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand so that it may give light to everyone in the house. In the same way no one keeps the good news only for himself or herself, but shares it with others who are in darkness.

The function of light is also its influence. While salt affects and functions invisibly, light affects visibly. Christian’s influence must be more active and visible, so that people who live in darkness may see our good deeds and come to God. The influence affects not only personally, but also nationally. The words ‘The City on a Hill’ used to be the motto of the United States of America. We must pray that America may become the City on a Hill for the whole world, which shines the gospel light to every corner of the world.

People say that the Olympics in Paris 2024 will be remembered as one of the worst Olympics in history. This is because of not only the blaspheming opening ceremony but also poor preparation and rising crimes around the Olympic compound. Visitors and even Olympians are afraid of going outside because of thieves. The whole Europe seems to be doomed spiritually, culturally, and socially. But God showed a great light to the dark Europe. God opened the European Summer Bible Conference in Prague Czech this weekend. The words of life are being proclaimed by inspiring messengers and teachers, and the name of Jesus is highly glorified through the conference. The conference becomes the salt of Europe which clears all ungodly and dirty spirits and heals all the sick nations. The conference becomes the light for Europe which gives light to them so that they may see the way, Jesus, and experience the kingdom of heaven. Amen! May God richly bless ESBC so that through this conference once more Europe may carry the torch of gospel to the world and we may see a spiritual Renaissance again. Amen!

All these eight blessings have common points. All these blessings come through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the source of all these eight blessings. Jesus himself fulfilled the condition of all these blessings. Jesus was poor in spirit and sought God through his constant prayer. Jesus mourned for those who are suffering under the power of sin. Jesus was humble and gentle. Jesus was eager to fulfill God’s righteousness through his obedience and finally became the peacemaker between God and men. Jesus endured the cross for God’s will for this world. Jesus taught us how to live as blessed people through his life. Through his life Jesus showed us what the kingdom of heaven is like. Amen!